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QUESTIONS

CIA Questions

1. Background: The USSR has announced a ton-kilometer output of freight traffic on the railroads amounting to 1,302 billion for 1958. Although we recognize that there may be a moderate amount of overstatement in their traffic announcement, it, nevertheless, represents the only measure of rail transportation performance in the USSR available to us.

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does a traffic performance of this magnitude appear reasonable?

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2. Background: You will recall that one of the problems we have in attempting to reconcile capacity with traffic estimates on the Trans-Siberian Railroad stems from the uncertainty in the utilization factors estimated for steam locomotive depots.

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3. Background: Another problem that has plagued us in estimating the capacity of yards has been the turnover factor in classification and relay yards.

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Questions: how frequently specific yards are able to classify cars during a 24-hour period? That is, assuming that a yard has the capacity to hold 500 cars at one time, could this yard turn over twice in 24 hours, or four times, or more? In yards used exclusively for relay purposes (the function of changing power and crews, inspecting, and cutting out cripples), how long is it reasonable to expect that a freight train will be delayed? Would the time period be more like 30 minutes or four hours?

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USAF Declass/Release Instructions On File

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4. Background: As you know there is some sentiment for an exchange of visits between US and USSR railroad officials.

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Air Force Questions

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The absence of traffic statistics, however, precludes some evaluation of Soviet rail performance. We are not at all convinced that the Russians were determined not to reveal any such statistics. The USSR has, in fact, gone to great expense to publish these statistics and to ensure their wide dissemination.

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In this connection, we would like clarification on the following points, if possible:

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3. [REDACTED] it is stated that 10 percent of the railways, handling 50 percent of the total traffic, have been equipped with automatic color signals. The USSR officially claims a network of about 121,000 km and a performance of 1,302 billion ton-km in 1951. Are the traffic densities implied by these figures credible as sustained national average performance? Is this density plausible without "two-way working ... on double lines"?

4. In many cases, it is simply a matter of understanding Soviet bookkeeping methods.

[REDACTED]

Evidently, the 1.9 percent unserviceability statistic refers only to cars awaiting repair and excludes the cars actually under repair.

[REDACTED]

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